

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A device for use in conjunction with a computer display apparatus and a fixed surface, comprising:

a stylus;

means supportable on a fixed surface and coupled to said stylus for supporting said stylus while allowing at least a plurality of degrees of freedom in the motion of said stylus; and

means for producing a stylus locative signal responsive to and corresponding with the position of the stylus at any point in time during its normal operation, said stylus locative signal providing information for use by a computer display apparatus.

2. A device as recited in Claim 1 wherein supporting means is a mechanical linkage.

3. A device as recited in Claim 2 wherein said stylus locative signal means is in communication with said mechanical linkage.

4. A device as recited in Claim 1 wherein said stylus locative signal means is in communication with said stylus.

5. A device as recited in Claim 1 further comprising:  
a remote unit having switch capable of being in an on state and an off state; and

command means triggered by said switch when said switch is in its on state for generating a command signal for receipt by a computer.

6. A device as recited in Claim 5 wherein said remote unit is a foot pedal unit.

7. A device as recited in Claim 2 wherein said mechanical linkage includes three individual components.

8. A device as recited in Claim 2 wherein said mechanical linkage includes at least three joints.

9. A device as recited in Claim 1 further comprising means for providing resistance to the motion of the stylus.

10. A device as recited in Claim 1 wherein said stylus has pencil-like configuration which can be manually manipulated.

11. A device as recited in Claim 1 further comprising:  
feedback means for generating force by said support means in response to force signals provided to said device, said force signals correlated to information displayed on computer display apparatus.

12. A method for interfacing a user and a computer display apparatus, comprising the steps of:

providing a stylus;

coupling to said stylus a support apparatus supportable on a fixed surface for supporting said stylus while allowing at least a plurality of degrees of freedom in the motion of said stylus; and

providing means for producing a stylus locative signal responsive to and corresponding with the position of the stylus at any point in time during its normal operation, said stylus locative signal providing information for use by a computer display apparatus.

13. A method as recited in Claim 12 wherein support apparatus is a mechanical linkage.

14. A method as recited in Claim 13 wherein said stylus locative signal means is in communication with said mechanical linkage.

15. A method as recited in Claim 12 wherein said stylus locative signal means is in communication with said stylus.

16. A method as recited in Claim 12 further comprising the steps of:  
providing a remote unit having switch capable of being in an on state and an off state; and  
providing a command signal generator triggered by said switch when said switch is in its on state for generating a command signal for receipt by a computer.

17. A method as recited in Claim 16 wherein said remote unit is a foot pedal unit.

18. A method as recited in Claim 13 wherein said mechanical linkage includes three individual components.

19. A method as recited in Claim 13 wherein said mechanical linkage includes at least three joints.

20. A method as recited in Claim 12 further comprising means for providing resistance to the motion of the stylus.

21. A method as recited in Claim 12 wherein said stylus has pencil-like configuration which can be manually manipulated.

22. A device as recited in Claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

providing feedback means for generating force by said support means in response to force signals provided to said device, said force signals correlated to information displayed on computer display apparatus.

23. In a computer system having a main unit and cursor control functions and command control functions which are triggered remotely from said main unit, a device for interfacing a user and computer, comprising:

a remote command control unit separate from a cursor control unit having a switch capable of being in an on state and an off state;

command means triggered by said switch when said switch is in its on state for generating a command signal representative of a command from a user to a computer; and

transmission means for transmitting said command signal to said computer.

24. A device as recited in Claim 21 wherein said remote command control unit is a foot pedal unit.

25. In a computer system having a main unit and cursor control functions and command control functions which are triggered remotely from said main unit, a system for interfacing a user and computer comprising the steps of:

providing a remote command control unit separate from a cursor control unit having a switch capable of being in an on state and an off state;

generating a command signal representative of a command from a user to a computer when said switch is in its on state; and

transmitting said command signal to said computer.

26. A system as recited in Claim 23 wherein said remote command control unit is a foot pedal unit.